

Township Board Special Meeting  
March 30, 2022  
Beth Chan, Recording Secretary

## PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City, MI 49686

Phone 231.223.7322

Township Board Special Meeting

March 30, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

**1. Call to Order:** 9:00 a.m. by Wunsch

**2. Pledge**

**3. Roll Call:** Present: Sanger, Bickle, Wunsch, Achorn; Absent: Wahl, Manigold, Chown

**4. Brief Citizen Comments (for agenda items only)**

**Brit Eaton, 1465 Neahtawanta Road:** has three questions: what is the major objective and goal for this expansion? Were there any studies done or estimates as to the number of additional visitors to the lighthouse/gift shop? Were there any considerations made for the additional parking congestion?

**Armen Shanafelt, 7402 E. Shore Road:** requested that his letter, submitted to the township via e-mail, be moved to the agenda. When reading through the resolution noticed that the township would be guaranteeing almost a quarter of a million dollars for a grant for the lighthouse. Where is the money coming from? Talked to the treasurer's office and the money is likely coming from the ARPA funds. Referred to the five questions in his letter (attached to the minutes). Questioned the use of ARPA funds in this situation. Noticed that nothing was set aside for maintenance of this project. Opposed to the grant request. Questioned the project; it was not vetted.

**Mike Skurski, 14696 Mallard Drive:** opposed to the proposed project/grant request (letter attached to the minutes). The parks committee has split the parks into two categories: recreation and historic preservation and education. The lighthouse fell in the historic category. If the lighthouse is going to enter into recreation, it should be placed with the parks committee for consideration and advice. There are many projects lined up for funding. We have gone through a ten-month exercise to ascertain what is important for the community and this was not on the list, it is not practical.

**5. Approve agenda**

**Moved by Bickle to amend the consent agenda to include the March 29, 2022 letters from Armen Shanafelt and Mike Skurski into the consent agenda, seconded by Sanger**

**Roll call**

**approved unanimously**

**6. Conflict of Interest:** none

**7. Consent agenda:** amended to include the letters from Armen Shanafelt and Mike Skurski

**8. Business:**

A. Public hearing on grant application titled "Mission Point Lighthouse Park" to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for improvements to Mission Point Lighthouse Park

**Wunsch closed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing**

**Shanafelt:** read five major questions (letter attached to minutes).

**Achorn:** in 2019, a public committee was formed with a representative from parks, three members of the township board, the historical society, and members of the community when we were working on the restoration of the exterior of the lighthouse. Additional problems in the area were brought up. Gordie-Fraser did preliminary design work along with cost estimates. Covid hit at this point. It was discovered that the main cost was the parking lot. The crowded parking lot was a safety issue that needed to be addressed. This is not a lighthouse project but a project that serves the state park and its trail systems. Covid put everything on hold and the lighthouse still owes a loan to the tower fund.

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**Bickle:** at that time, the enterprise funds would be engaged.

**Achorn:** at that time, before ARPA, the funds from the gift shop contributed to the lighthouse.

**Shanafelt:** there was not adequate public input, confused as to why a public mechanism was not used for this project?

**Wunsch:** concerned as to why was the parks committee was not involved, was the parks committee was not engaged due to deadlines?

**Achorn:** There was an April first deadline. The grant writer was engaged at the beginning of the year and examined grant opportunities to see what grant money was available for the list of projects; looking for money to do some projects.

#### **Discussion of project funding and the RTF application**

**Sanger:** unaware

**Wunsch:** why wasn't the parks committee engaged?

**Achorn:** ARPA funds are to be used for any legitimate township expenditure.

**Shanafelt:** The ARPA funds, how do the residents feel about this grant, is this a legitimate township project?

**Wunsch:** need to kick this back to the park committee to figure out how to allocate funds. The township can back out of the NRTF award.

**Shanafelt:** this is put together for a deadline with matching funds, is this the right approach?

Appreciates the need for more parking, but public input is warranted. Wants to support increased visitation to the lighthouse, concerned about the project being proposed in the first place. What does the master plan say?

**Wunsch:** would vote not to move forward and return it to the parks committee. The grant writer should meet with the parks committee.

**Shanafelt:** The survey was completed; the lighthouse did not rank high on the list. What is the point of the survey?

**Wunsch:** this process needs to be corrected, hearing that Shanafelt requests that the NRTF not move forward, versus getting the grant and APRA funds and attempting to reallocate the funds. The DNR wants to know if the project survives the political process.

**Skurski:** discussed the Kelly boat launch, versus the lighthouse project. There are other options and communication did not occur between the township and the parks committee.

**Bickle:** discussed funding; looking at ARPA to help with the parks project.

**Wunsch:** the parks committee was not consulted

**Sanger:** surprised it is a fifty percent match, looked at the survey: running water and bathrooms are a priority in our parks. Where did this originate?

**Achorn:** initially the Bowers Harbor grant requested that we start at twenty-five percent, it was worth so many points and then increased it to fifty percent. At fifty percent, we can get an additional number of points. That grant started with bathrooms and we were told it would not be approved. What was the best chance of getting approved?

**Shanafelt:** appreciates the process, but not the outcome. This does not address what is needed.

**Achorn:** the parks committee members should have been involved.

**Wunsch:** hearing that this is a low-priority project; the parks committee has concerns about moving this forward.

**Skurski:** if money is available, some projects are listed and ready to go.

**Wunsch:** there are higher priority projects that for \$235,000. If the application was voted to submit, we would be applying for something we do not need.

**Sanger:** for grants, it is our decision, this is not the path we want to go.

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**Wunsch:** we are a high priority for NPTF projects, but do we put in the application for a project we do not want to move forward? We can apply for something we do not want, modify the request, or vote no.

**Achorn:** this started with the need for bathrooms in the parks, it went up by \$235,000 based on the points system, therefore the bathrooms were cut. There were two parallel projects the Pelizzari project, the ADA boardwalk with parking, and the decision was made for the parking at the lighthouse. The rest of the decision was put with what the DNR is looking for which is shoreline access. Asked where the public input came from? Kelly Park was originally approved but it was turned down by the board. Parking is needed at the lighthouse. Universal access to the beach was discussed in 2019. This package was put together with the items needed to score the maximum number of points to get approval for funding.

**Bickle:** looking for a thought process, is this something to move forward with? Marge discovered public input was not included. Not comfortable, need to watch what we spend.

**Sanger:** cannot vote on an application he has not seen

**Wunsch:** we are filing a notice of intent for a grant

**Shanafelt:** parking and universal access are compelling; struggling with an application for a grant we will not use.

**Wunsch:** The application deadline is April 1, 2022.

**Sanger:** applications should be credible and all should be more informed.

**Wunsch:** is this project good enough to move forward; the parks committee does not want the project to move forward.

**Discussion of other projects that benefit residents: Murray Road and Kelly Park improvements**

**Achorn:** the idea was to use the ARPA money for a grant match to stretch the budget and not use enterprise funds

**Sanger:** the grant was written by a skilled grant writer, but will it be used?

**Moved by Bickle to close the public hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Sanger**  
**approved by consensus**

B. Resolution 2022-03-30 #1 Approving Submission of Application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund 2022 Grant Program (Achorn)

**Moved by Sanger to deny Resolution 2022-03-30 #1 Submission of Application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund 2022 Grant Program, seconded by Bickle based on community input**

**Roll call: Sanger, yes; Achorn, yes; Wunsch; yes, Bickle, yes** **motion denied**

**Moved by Bickle to enter closed session pursuant to MCL 15.264(e), seconded by Sanger**

**Roll call:** **approved unanimously**

C. Enter closed session pursuant to MCL 15.264(e) to discuss the winery lawsuit and updates (Meihn)

Return to open session pursuant to MCL 15.261

**Moved by Bickle to return to open session pursuant to MCL 15.261, seconded by Sanger**

**Roll call:** **approved unanimously**

9. Citizen Comments: None

10. Board Comments: None

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**11. Adjournment:**

**Moved by Bickle to adjourn, seconded by Sanger**  
Adjournment at 11:35 a.m.

**approved by consensus**

DRAFT

29 March 2022

To: Peninsula Township Board  
Re: "Mission Point Lighthouse Park" grant application

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to you both as a member of the Peninsula Township Parks committee and as a resident.

With regards to the proposed grant application entitled "Mission Point Lighthouse Park" and the guarantee of \$235,000 in matching funds from the Township (Resolution 2022-03-30 #1) for this project:

1. What was the process to engage public input that supports the design of this project?
2. How does this project fit into the Parks' master plan?
3. Where does this project rank in the context of the recent resident survey to determine priorities for the Peninsula Township Parks?
4. Does this plan reflect the interests of residents?
5. What will be the source of the matching funds that the Township is guaranteeing?

None of these questions is rhetorical; the answers to each **should be:**

1. A measured, distinct, and thorough process that engaged a large portion of Peninsula Township residents was conducted in the several months preceding the initiation of the grant writing process.
2. This project is one of the top 10% of all capital improvement projects in the Peninsula Parks Master Plan
3. This project is one of the top 3 projects voted on by residents in the recent survey
4. Yes, this plan is a direct response to the stated needs of the residents
5. The matching funds will come solely from Lighthouse-related revenue sources

Although I appreciate that there is both a viable opportunity for grant funding, and a rapidly approaching deadline for this grant application, this application, and the associated resolution by the Township, should not move forward until these questions have been appropriately addressed.

Respectfully,

Armen Shanafelt  
7402 E Shore Road

March 29, 2022

Peninsula Township Trustees

RE: Lighthouse Kayak, Parking and UA Project, Resolution 2022-3-30#1

Dear Trustees,

I have been on the Park Commission and now Park Committee since 2015. I have never seen a proposal that lacked a true public vetting process or one that does not possess a significant priority like the proposition you have before you in Resolution 2022-3-30#1.

Voting a \$250,000 commitment from the township's general funds or its anticipated ARPA funding on a township agenda 15 hours before a grant deadline is not part of a transparent process. Spending of this significant amount of money deserves a full public formulation opportunity.

This project is not even mentioned in the Park Master Plan, drawn up in 2018 - when the Lighthouse was part of Peninsula Parks. It has not, to my knowledge, been mentioned at any prior public Trustee meeting prior to the March 30 special meeting.

The wishes and priority of our residents, as recently collected during a 10 month long process undertaken by the Park Committee and advised by LIAA- which required 2 budget requests in excess of \$20,000, approved by the trustees, fails to show any support for this project. The Lighthouse projects that did garner support placed either dead last - new staircase and new barn - or received low support, 7 votes for parking. The Kelly Park boat launch received 42 and Bowers Harbor restrooms were #1 at 59. I ask how this project needs immediate and such significant support.

Would not our residents be better served by the long promised Kelly boat launch?

The proposed launch will bring more nonlocal traffic to OMP. It will require users to paddle out about 1/2 mile to avoid the 2 'horns' that jut out from the OMP tip. My family and I have launched SUP and kayaks from the beaches of The Old Mission State Park and found no requirement of a 'launch' as they easily launch from the shore.

However - if the Trustees determine that this project is a must have project, I ask that they utilize and specify that the Lighthouse Park and Lighthouse Gift shop accounts' surplus balances be utilized for the required matching funding. The Lighthouse accounts have \$161,435 in the Lighthouse account and \$95,559 in the Gift Shop account according to the township 2022-23 Budget and Balances dated March 23. As the project footprint is in the township's Lighthouse Park, utilizing the outstanding balances would not be contrary to any restrictions for their usage.

Committing ARPA or other township funds will preclude project spending on infrastructure projects that are needed and supported by residents and will not provide residents the opportunity for input on how these additional funds can be utilized.

I ask that you review your process for this project and launch a project seeking public input on how to utilize ARPA funds.

Michael Skurski

14696 Mallard Drive

Chairman, Peninsula Township Park Committee